

**Amendments to the Claims**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims:**

1. ... 14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) A method for predicting exceptions in a workflow instance comprising the steps of:

a) preparing data from past workflow executions;

b) generating at least one exception prediction model based on the prepared data;

and

c) using the exception prediction model to generate at least one prediction of an exception before the exception occurs for a current instance of the workflow instance;

and

performing an action during execution of the workflow instance to avoid occurrence of the exception in the workflow instance.

16. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein exception prediction includes the steps of  
building a process analysis table for a process definition of interest;  
adding labeling information to the process analysis table; and  
generating classification rules by employing data mining techniques.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein classification rules are generated for each stage in a process and are stored in a repository.

18. (original) The method of claim 17 wherein at least one classification rule set generated for a process execution stage is executed to make predictions on at least one running process instance.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 18 wherein at least one prediction is stored in a repository; wherein the prediction stored in the repository includes the exception being predicted and an indication of an accuracy of the prediction.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the at least one prediction is reported to a workflow management system (WFMS) so that the WFMS alters execution of processes to try to avoid the exception.

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 15 further comprising:

- reporting classification rules to a user;

- selectively removing input data to refine the classification rules; and

- re-generating the classification rules by employing data mining techniques.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein when the classification rules are satisfactory to the user, storing the classification rules in a database.

23. (previously presented) A method of predicting exceptions in a workflow process, comprising:

- analyzing data during execution of a workflow process to generate classification rules for plural stages of the workflow process;

- generating prediction rules for the plural stages to generate a probability of an exception in the workflow process; and

- when the probability exceeds a threshold, then performing an action during execution of the workflow process to avoid the exception.

24 (previously presented) The method of claim 23 further comprising: constructing a process analysis table for each of the plural stages to generate the classification rules.

25 (previously presented) The method of claim 23 further comprising: using data mining techniques to generate the classification rules.

26. (new) The method of claim 15 further comprising, refining the at least one prediction as process execution of the workflow instance proceeds.